

Career Rx

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Life is a Journey!

Some of us take a straight and narrow path, while others take several detours before reaching our destination, but for everyone - life is a journey! The destination chosen is defined by us based on our own perceived vision or plan. Whether we succeed is also a personal perception as there are many successes along one's journey. But do we stop to recognize them or just drive on to get to our ultimate destination? For some of us, the destination is not well defined but rather a combination of several detours along the way. For others, the road chosen is part of their plan with identified rest and refueling stops along their way to their ultimate destination. It is our decisions that determine the paths taken, and how we feel about the journey that determines our feelings about our success!

Even with planning, however, our journey can be thrown off by some unexpected detours along the road. How we respond, recover and adapt is critical. For some, these detours can be wonderful explorations in learning. For others, it is just adding a delay to their destination. One's reaction is important as it speaks to how we adapt to life's constantly changing environments. Sometimes, this detour can be the best thing that ever happened as we may have been headed in the wrong direction without knowing it. How we deal with these detours or life changes, influences our outlook and the view of the future, and will greatly impact our perception of success along the journey.

For many of us, our journey is peaceful until we are laid off or become unhappy in our job. When this occurs, we often feel lost and confused and our path becomes unclear. During this time, it is important to take the time to assess where we are along our path and where we are headed. Most times, we tend to just continue along and pursue what we have been doing before without considering the changes within us and around us. As individuals, we are constantly growing and learning and sometimes we get stuck. This is the perfect time for some self assessment within us. The changes around us include the economy, the global and local market place demands, and technology, just to name some influences.

One tool may be to think of your life as a GPS system that breaks down in the middle of the trip. What do we do when this happens? Do we stop and ask for directions? Do we look at a map and find alternative routes to get there? How many of us still have maps as a backup for our electronic devices? Let's correlate this to our careers. We set out with a destination in mind until something detours us in life - a layoff and we are forced to make alternative choices. What is the backup contingency? Is it reviewing the map or our plan? Is it asking for help? Is it needing a fix or retooling?

We need to understand how to adapt to changes in our environment in order to succeed. Typically, this demands we become adaptable like learning something new about yourself and the world around you. Open your eyes to new possibilities that you may not have seen before. Be curious! The more you learn the better rounded you become in your ability to engage. Consider volunteering on a part time basis while in your job search. It allows you to develop new relationships, learn and/or update new skills and become a partner in enterprises larger than yourself.

Being laid off or being unhappy in one's position is an example of such a detour. Being laid off typically propels us into reactive mode, while being unhappy in one's position provides more opportunity to plan some alternative paths to your destination...which may have shifted based on your vision.

Whichever event occurs in our life's journey, we need to understand how to adapt to our environment or changing landscape in order to succeed. This awareness and ability to be an open learner needs to be part of every career plan. Learn and explore new ideas as this will lead you to many new discoveries. The individual that is able to adapt will typically be more successful in their journey regardless of the detours taken.

Remember, life is a journey. So take the time to plan and remember to enjoy your journey. There must be some openness to your path taken as it allows adaptability as detours are encountered. Some detours can enrich your experiences along the way so learn to leverage these discoveries that can be influential to changing your thinking. Sometimes a detour and some help from your family and friends can make a big difference. Life has changed for many of us. There are some fortunate individuals that love what they do day after day. They draw energy from their activities. They typically have a focus or a vision. Determine what you are open to and envision your success. Success is defined by each and every one of us differently. Enjoy life's successes along the way – whether small or large. Remember to share your joy and energy to enrich your life and the journey you take.

Life is a journey. So take the time to plan and remember to enjoy your journey. Life is full of opportunities – we just need to learn to recognize them.

This column provides thought provoking strategies for getting unstuck along your career journey. A certified Executive and Career Coach can be instrumental in guiding you in your efforts to gain a new perspective. I invite you to contact me @ Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com

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Lisa's extensive human resources and coaching experience with Fortune 500 companies, small enterprises, medium-sized firms, and non-profit organizations gives her the unique ability to bring together wide-ranging perspectives on career transitions, executive and leadership development. She has consulted with a wide variety of sectors — consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and life sciences, publishing, professional services, technology, and non-profit. Lisa has a passion for motivational speaking, conducts career forums, and provides executive and career coaching.

Lisa's greatest strength is that she enables individuals and organizations to see themselves in new ways, freeing them to achieve their goals. Lisa can be reached at Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com.